

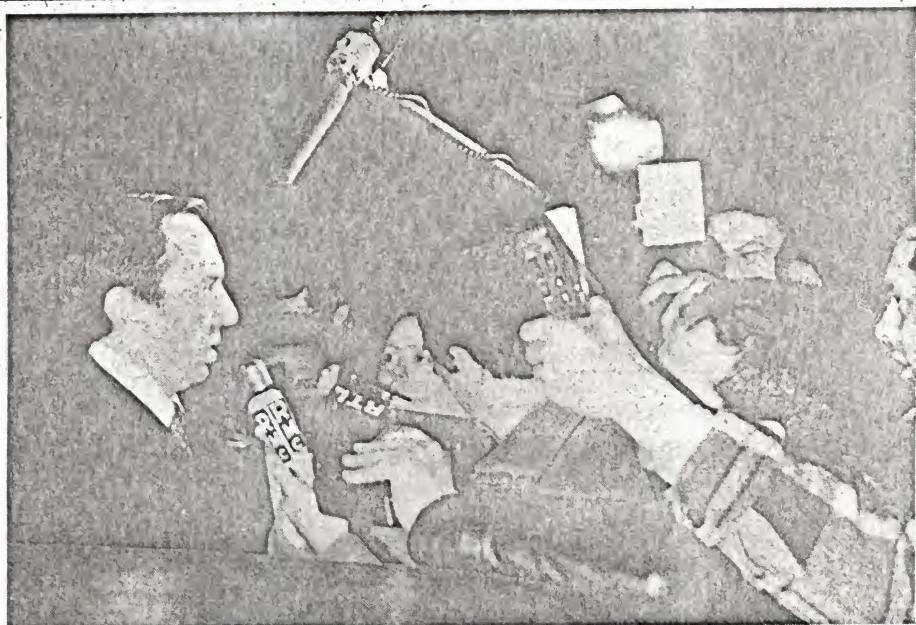
create new pressures on West Berlin, make it more difficult for West Germans to visit relatives in East Germany, and lead to a cutoff of the steady repatriation from Poland and the U.S.S.R. of tens of thousands of ethnic Germans. There is also a compelling economic consideration: last year's West German-Soviet trade totaled \$7.6 billion. As for Paris, it insists as usual that it will pursue its own policy toward Moscow rather than follow the U.S. lead. Declared French Foreign Minister Jean François-Poncet: "France is not America's farmyard."

There is an irony to this lack of allied support. For some time, the West Europeans, and particularly Germany's Schmidt, have sharply criticized Carter for being soft and indecisive. But now that the President has begun acting like the leader of the West, key allies are balking. Said Schmidt to an aide: "Carter is running around, tightening here, tightening there, without knowing what the results will be, without stopping to think what the effects could be on Western Europe."

This allied passivity, some argue, may be an early form of "Finlandization." But whether it genuinely reflects popular attitudes is open to question. In fact, there were mounting signs last week that the West German and French public sided with the U.S. Said Political Scientist Pierre Hassner: "Public opinion is ahead here. The people are really taking these events seriously, and the governments of France and West Germany look as though they are clinging to old notions. They are out of touch with their people on this issue." Across the border, Frankfurt's respected *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* editorialized that "the question now is whether the friends and allies of the U.S. will show the required degree of solidarity, even if it is at their expense. At least an attempt must be made to contain Soviet arrogance."

Implicit in the process of forging a new approach to America's foreign relations is a scrutiny of the policies that have guided the Administration up to now. One unavoidable question: To what extent did Washington itself bring on the current crisis? Some experts charge that the Administration underestimated the Kremlin. They argue that Secretary of State Vance and his Soviet affairs specialist, Marshall Shulman, dismissed Soviet interference (either direct or with Cuban proxies) in Angola and Ethiopia as simply opportunities that were too tempting for Moscow to ignore. The long-range consequences of such moves would not necessarily be serious, the State Department often said, because the Soviets had on several occasions been expelled from countries they had seemed to be dominating. Chief examples: Egypt, Sudan and Somalia.

One of the most forceful critiques of such assessments of the Kremlin comes from Malcolm Toon, a recently retired career diplomat who served as U.S. Am-



Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher answering reporters' questions in Paris

Advises one expert: "We need to get tough on our allies in addition to the Soviets."

bassador in Moscow for three years. Says he: "We have tended to shove aside our real perception of the Soviet threat. We have underestimated the competitive aspects of the relationship and overestimated the cooperative ones." He urges the U.S. to have no "illusions that the Soviets are, like us, interested in world peace and reducing tensions."

Apparently Toon was nudged out of his Moscow post last October because Washington was annoyed by his repeated warnings of potential Soviet aggression. He told TIME: "It seemed obvious to us in Moscow that the Soviets regarded Afghanistan in their vital inter-

est and would move in with all their power to protect that interest." The State Department, however, asserts that Toon's cables called a Soviet invasion "very unlikely."

The Administration also might be faulted for sending unclear signals to Moscow and frequently changing direction. For example, Carter, in a major foreign policy speech at the U.S. Naval Academy in June 1978, simultaneously warned the Soviets of U.S. strength and appealed for compromise, leaving observers wondering whether he was waving a saber or an olive branch. The dovish stance he seemed to be taking when he canceled the B-1 supersonic bomber and indefinitely postponed production of the neutron warhead appeared to be contradicted by his approval of the MX mobile missile and his frequent denunciation of Soviet human rights violations. Part of the problem has been that Carter has been receiving almost diametrically conflicting advice from his two top foreign affairs aides, the generally conciliatory Vance and the relatively hard-line Brzezinski.

Many experts believe that Carter's zigzagging policy has confused, irritated and at times infuriated the Soviets. But it is also possible (and the two points are not contradictory) that the fumbling U.S. policy led Moscow to conclude that it might be able to take advantage of a President who appeared so unsure of himself.

Another element that may have contributed to the current crisis is the Administration's declining ability to use force. The steady drop in defense spending for almost the entire decade after 1966 has limited the President's capacity to deter or respond to Soviet adventurism. Similarly, the President has been deprived of considerable flexibility in pursuing policy because of the statutes, enacted in the

Good Old Days

There once was a simpler way to deal with the Soviets, Senator Henry Jackson recalled last week—and it involved another Iran crisis. In 1946 the Soviets and British agreed to end their World War II occupation of Iran, but the Soviets reneged. They increased their forces and set up autonomous regimes in the northwestern provinces of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan.

In a little-known episode of nuclear diplomacy that Jackson said he had heard from Harry Truman, the President summoned Soviet Ambassador Andrei Gromyko to the White House. Truman told Gromyko that Soviet troops should evacuate Iran within 48 hours—or the U.S. would use the new superbomb that it alone possessed. "We're going to drop it on you," Jackson quoted Truman as saying. "They moved in 24 hours."